

## To Serve His Purposes – part 2

### Joining God's Team – part 10

March 10, 2024

Last week we looked at serving God's purpose from a big picture perspective:

God's fundamental purpose is the redemption of lost humanity.

Life vision statement: By God's grace, to step forward, as God's man or woman, in my spheres of influence, **to serve His purposes**, for His glory.

This week we'll look at specific ways that we serve His purposes in the lives of people.

#### **DAY 1: Testimony: sharing your faith story**

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

1. A witness just needs to tell what they have seen and know.
  
2. Your testimony is simply your faith story. A testimony can go in one of two directions:
  - a. How did you get saved? (Jot down a few talking points)

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- b. What are some ways Jesus made a difference in your life?

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3. The Great Commission:

*Matthew 28:19 As you are going, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...*

4. This final command of Jesus in Matthew is our marching order. We do not exist primarily for ourselves but for the people God has placed around you.

*Romans 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone telling them?*

5. What strikes you from today's writing?

## DAY 2: We are salt and light

1. Jesus uses two metaphors to describe and illustrate the kind of impact we can have on people around us. Salt is the first metaphor.

*Matthew 5:13 **You are the salt of the earth.** But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.*

2. Salt can serve (1) as a preserver of what is good, and (2) can make foods tasty.

*Colossians 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup>**Let your conversation** be always full of grace, **seasoned with salt**, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

3. Paul uses the metaphor of salt regarding how we talk and converse with people. What comes to your mind about we are to talk and converse with people? What makes our conversations tasty?

4. The second metaphor is light. Light is a metaphor for wisdom, truth, and understanding.

*Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

5. What do you think Jesus means by you being a light to the world?

*2 Corinthians 4:5 For what we preach is Jesus as Lord, with **ourselves as your servant**.*

6. Here, Paul combines what we say (gospel, testimony) with serving others.

7. Are there ways you can serve some of the people at your work? With lost people you know?

8. Serving, salt, and light find a combination in this next command of Jesus.

*Matthew 5:41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.*

a. Roman soldiers in Jesus' day could force any Jew to carry their armor for one mile. The Jewish people hated this law. Jesus said that when that happens to you, as a Christian, go two miles!

b. What positive effects might that have on someone?

9. What strikes you from today's writing?

### **DAY 3: The power of example in the life of the believer**

1. Many Christians, like me, attest that they became Christians because they saw something in some Christians they knew that they themselves didn't have. For me, it was an internal peace and an internal joy I simply could not produce in me.

*Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

2. These qualities become a silent witness to the effect God has in us!

3. Before you became a Christian did you see any of these things missing in you, that some Christians did have? What effect did that have on you?

4. When you are at work, you have the opportunity to put Jesus on display through these fruits of the Spirit! When you are around neighbors, extended family members, at your kids' school, you have the opportunity to put Jesus on display through these fruits of the Spirit!

5. When Paul traveled to the city of Thessalonica, he started a church.

*1 Thessalonians 2:9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. <sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. <sup>11</sup> For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

6. Paul was serving God's purposes. What stands out to you from Paul's words?

7. What do you notice about Paul's example?

8. What do you notice about the nature of the relationships Paul built with the people?

9. It is both the power of our example and the message / testimony we carry with us that can change people's lives!

## DAY 4: Putting Jesus on display

1. Jesus quoted this prophecy, in reference to Himself as the Messiah.

*Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,*

*to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,*

*<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD **for the display of his splendor.***

2. The redemption of people is seen in a handful of metaphors in this prophecy. Notice how this prophecy ends. All of this dramatic life change in people *displays His splendor*.

3. As God changes your life Jesus is “put on display” to the people around you.

4. In John 9, Jesus and the disciples come upon a man born blind. The disciples ask the cause of his blindness. Was it the fault of his parents or him?

*John 9:3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened **so that the works of God might be displayed in him.** <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

5. This is a stunning statement about Jesus. The blindman was not “just dealt a bad hand.” Instead, this man’s disability had a divine purpose to it! What was that purpose?

6. When God confronted Pharaoh through Moses, we see that Pharaoh was more than “just” a pharaoh or a powerful ruler.

*Romans 9:17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, **that I might display my power in you** and **that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.**”*

7. Again, like the statement about the blind man, this is equally stunning! God used Pharaoh to reveal Himself to the world! What strikes you about this?

8. God uses us to put Jesus on display through our actions, service, attitudes, words, disabilities, and suffering.

Your life serves His purposes when we serve His purposes!!!

## DAY 5: Divine love on display, relationally!

1. The Great Commandment: loving God and loving people

2. When Jesus was asked what was the most important commandment, this was His answer.

*Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

2. All of Paul’s teaching had this same goal, this same endpoint.

*1 Tim. 1:5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

3. Paul reiterated the pre-eminence of love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

*John 13:34-35 (Jesus said) A new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you... By this will all men know that you are My disciples if you love one another.*

4. This is Jesus’ best “marketing tool.” In a world of shallow or broken relationships, relational drama, name-dropping, one-upping, sarcasm, cutting words, love “as I have loved you” stands out as something rare! Human nature, on its own, can not produce that kind of love. We are just too self-centered.

5. This was Jesus’ prayer for all of us:

*John 17:21 ...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—<sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

6. The kind of oneness Jesus prays for us is not just agreeing on important matters. He is praying for the kind of relationships we may build and enjoy that are of the same nature as the relationships the Trinity enjoys one with Another: deep, real, other-centered, and life-giving!

7. Notice, this is the same “marketing tool” as we saw in John 13:34-35.

8. We have spent the week looking at ways to “serve His purposes” of putting Jesus on display, that the redemptive work of God can impact and bring real life to people.

9. As we finish the week, what is one thing that stands out to you?